



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BORDER OFFICIAL INDICTED ON BRIBERY AND DRUG CHARGES

TUCSON, Ariz.—A federal grand jury here returned a two-count indictment this week against Fernando Arango, 51, of Rio Rico, Ariz. Arango, an officer with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, is charged in the indictment with Bribery of a Public Official and Attempting to Possess with Intent to Distribute Cocaine. He was arrested by the FBI on Sunday, October 2, 2005. His arraignment in federal court is scheduled for Thursday, November 3, 2005 at 11:00 a.m.

U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton stated that "There are thousands of honest, hard working federal agents working our border and throughout Arizona. Misconduct to this degree tarnishes their image in the public eye."

"CBP does not tolerate corruption on the part of its personnel. Although the vast majority of CBP frontline officers are law enforcement professionals of the highest integrity, the few that are not will face very serious consequences, including criminal prosecution," said Robert C. Bonner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner.

The criminal complaint alleged that on October 2, 2005, Arango was paid \$50,000 in U.S. currency for passing a recreational vehicle, that he believed contained 200 kilograms of cocaine, through the Mariposa Port of Entry checkpoint on October 1, 2005, and that he took affirmative action to ensure that the vehicle was not searched.

A conviction for Attempting to Posses with Intent to Distribute five kilos or more of cocaine carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$4 million fine or both. A conviction for Bribery of a Public Official carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison, a \$250,000 or both. In determining an actual sentence, the assigned judge will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the complaint was conducted by the FBI and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Office of Professional Responsibility. The prosecution is being handled by James T. Lacey, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

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